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Hitler's Position on Vegetarianism

In his opinion meat was dead, putrefied matter, and in addition he disapproved of the cruel manner in which animals were slaughtered in the abattoirs.

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This is the compilation of various sources which say Hitler was a vegetarian.

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"Geli's suicide hit Hitler hard, and at this point he converted to vegetarianism. [...]His favourite meals at the beginning of the 1930s were white beans, peas and lentils, vegetable dishes and salads. During the war when a dietician-cook was employed he followed the Bircher-Benner diet. He was sincerely opposed to meat eating, and according to Julius Schaub became vegetarian after the death of Geli Raubal. He was absolutely convinced that meat eating was harmful. As an example he cited horses, bulls and elephants, all plant-eaters, which had great strength and endurance. 'Contrast them with dogs,' he would say, 'which are confirmed meat eaters and, after a bit of effort, finish up panting with their tongues hanging out.' In his opinion meat was dead, putrefied matter, and in addition he disapproved of the cruel manner in which animals were slaughtered in the abattoirs. Once I discussed this with Ada Klein. When I mentioned Hitler's remarks about meat eaters she recalled an incident at Easter 1926 when she visited a matinée of the Zigeunerbaron in the Gärtner-Platz theatre. Afterwards they ate at the Café Viktoria in the Maximilian-Strasse opposite the Thierschstrasse (now the Restaurant Roma). Hitler ordered kid liver. The waiter brought a giant portion. Hitler asked: 'Is that the liver from one kid?' The waiter replied: 'No, from two!' At that Hitler remarked to Ada: 'The human is an evil animal of prey. Two small innocent animals were deprived of life to provide a glutton with a gourmet dish. I believe I shall become vegetarian one day.' After Geli's death he actually did convert and never tired of holding forth from time to time during meals on the brutal methods of slaughter. When Eva Braun then gave him a pleading look to not go on about it so at the meal table because it put many guests off their food listening to the discourse, this confirmed the correctness of his opinion. On the other hand he would go into almost poetic rapture whenever he described how his own vegetarian meal had been grown. The farmer sweeping the seed fan-wise from his hand in that great gesture with his arm as he bestrode his fields; how the broadcast seed fell to earth, sprouted and grew into a green sea of waving stems turning slowly golden yellow in the sun. 'This picture alone', he believed, 'should tempt Man back to Nature and her produce, which is given to mankind in wasteful fullness.' He would always round off by saying that he did not intend to convert anybody to vegetarianism, for if he did in the end nobody would accept his invitations to dine any more."

— *He Was My Chief: The Memoirs of Adolf Hitler's Secretary*, Christa Schroeder

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"Hitler exerted no pressure upon his guests with regard to vegetarianism, although he often talked with them about it and teased them about their food habits, calling them "corpse eaters." [...] He himself would argue in favor of a vegetarian diet, saying it had been the primeval diet of the human race and was to be desired as the diet of the future because it was both wholesome and economical. One of his favorite subjects of conversation—to the distress of Göring—was his vigorous condemnation of hunting unless it involved the hunter's actually risking his own life. He said he could never harm so beautiful an animal as a deer, and forbade all hunting on the Obersalzberg. [...] Hitler was a complete vegetarian; he never ate meat or fish. He lived almost entirely on vegetables and certain cereals; even bread and butter would give him indigestion. Zwieback and knäckebrød, honey, tomato ketchup, mushrooms, curds, and yogurt were for a long time the basic elements in his diet. In later years he could no longer stand coffee, and only limited amounts of milk. All his food was specially prepared; even his soups were not the same as those served to the other guests. In his last years he had a special Viennese dietetic cook who even at military headquarters would prepare the Führer's meals in a special small kitchen. Incidentally, in 1932 when Hitler was living at the Hotel Kaiserhof in Berlin and suspected a plot to poison him, Frau Goebbels used frequently to prepare his meals at her home and spirit them up to his hotel room. I have often wondered how, given his austere diet and his insomnia, Hitler managed to summon up the strength and the tremendous force of will that he manifested for so many years. His energy verged on the abnormal. The only possible biological explanation for it was that he must have been consuming his physical reserves at a pace which would surely lead to premature bodily degeneration."

— Otto Dietrich, *The Hitler I Knew: Memoirs of the Third Reich's Press Chief*

"He could not bear to eat meat, since it meant the death of a living creature. He refused to have so much as a rabbit or a trout sacrificed to provide his food. He would allow only eggs on his table, because egg-laying meant that the hen had been spared rather than killed."

— Léon Degrelle, *Hitler Democrat*

"Hitler adhered to his vegetarian diet, which a first-class cook from Vienna used to prepare for him, until Bormann discovered that her Aryan ancestry was not all that it should have been, and she was, unfortunately, dismissed.[...] "The service was in the hands of SS-men, specially trained for the purpose. They wore short white jackets and black trousers and their service was deft and discreet. The normal meal, other than on State occasions, was usually quite homely and consisted of soup, a meat course with vegetables and a light sweet. If any of the guests present preferred, like Hitler, to have a vegetarian meal, his wishes were at once fulfilled; but the only one I ever saw who exercised this privilege was Martin Bormann.[...] 'Our Bavarian Cannibal' was what Hitler used to call me. He was very anxious to convert me to vegetarianism, but in this he had as little success..."

—Heinrich Hoffman, *Hitler Was My Friend: The Memoirs of Hitler's Photographer*



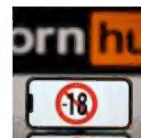
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"The Führer also tried to put meat-eaters off their food at mealtimes. He didn't actually want to convert anyone to vegetarianism, but he would suddenly begin to talk about the horrors of an abattoir. 'One day, when headquarters was stationed in Ukraine, my men were to be shown the biggest, most modern of the local abattoirs. It was a fully modernized factory seeing the job right through from pig to sausage, including processing the bones, bristles and skin. Everything was so clean and neat, with pretty girls in high gumboots standing up to their calves in fresh blood. All the same, the meat-eating men felt unwell, and many of them left without seeing everything. I run no such risks. I can happily watch carrots and potatoes being pulled up, eggs collected from the henhouse and cows milked.' "

—Traudl Junge, *Hitler's Last Secretary: A Firsthand Account of Life with Hitler*

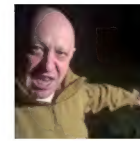
"Hitler himself ate vegetarian meals prepared by his personal nutritionist.[...] Those around the Führer also ensured that his vegetarian food was thoroughly checked to prevent any possibility of him being poisoned.. [...]"The old farmhouses were demolished. In their stead, Bormann had new buildings constructed: a barracks complex for a company of SS men; an agricultural estate that was to serve as a model farm; a greenhouse to provide the vegetarian Hitler with fresh fruit and vegetables all year round; a small tearoom at the Mooslahner Kopf peak a few hundred metres down the mountain from the Berghof proper; and a further tearoom (the most expensive and difficult of Bormann's projects) on the Kehlstein peak some 800 metres higher up.[...] He enjoyed playing the Viennese charmer, showering the women with compliments and telling them about practical jokes he had played in school or amusing incidents from the "years of struggle." He also lectured about the health benefits of vegetarianism and his favourite dishes, such as the bread dumplings with sorrel sauce his mother had made for him. "

—Volker Ullrich, *Hitler: Downfall 1939-45*

"Earlier in his life, Hitler had eaten meat, but he had suddenly pronounced himself a vegetarian after a suicide tragedy in his town apartment in Munich...— a fad for which he later offered various excuses: that he had noticed body odours when he ate meat; or that the human jaw was designed for vegetarian meals. Hitler regaled his Berghof diners with unappetising detail of the various processes he had observed in a slaughter-house, and all the distracting endeavours of the young woman at his side failed to stop him from inflicting this on each new unsuspecting visitor to the Berghof."

—David Irving, *Hitler's War and the War Path*

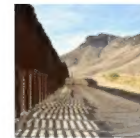
"Hitler was vegetarian, Bormann had to be so too. He [Bormann] would inform everybody how delicious he found the various vegetarian dishes and how they helped him enjoy his work more."



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— *Erich Kempka, I Was Hitler's Chauffeur*

"Meals were Wehrmacht catering and consisted of soup, meat and a dessert. Hitler had his own vegetarian menu which he drew up at breakfast time. The seating arrangement never varied. Hitler sat in the middle with his back to the windows. To his right sat Press Chief Dr Dietrich, to his left Jodl. [...] Fräulein Wolf and other members of the personal Adjutantur now prepared to leave the bunker. In the late evening we gathered in Hitler's small living room for drinks—Eva Braun, Hitler's secretaries Gerda Christian and Trautl Junge and his vegetarian cook Constanze Marzialy, plus Schaub, Lorenz and myself. The war was not mentioned: Gerda Christian was good at getting Hitler to talk on other subjects."

— *Nicolaus von Below, At Hitler's Side: The Memoirs of Hitler's Luftwaffe Adjutant 1937-1945,*

"Two vegetarian courses, both including the obligatory apple, were provided for him to choose from. If strangers came to lunch, Hitler's food was arranged in such a way that the absence of meat was not obvious at first glance. After breakfast Hitler would greet his adjutants and myself and proceed with us to the rooms set aside for conferences with foreign visitors and businessmen. [...] His diet consisted principally of potatoes and vegetables, a stew without meat, and fruit. [...] He [Hitler] was a strict vegetarian and a nonsmoker but was not opposed to alcohol."

— *Heinz Linge, With Hitler to the End: The Memoirs of Adolf Hitler's Valet*

"When it comes to the topic of food, all one can actually muster up for the man is pity. He [Hitler] followed a strict vegetarian diet. During some brief periods we were instructed to serve him only raw food. His decision to follow a vegetarian diet goes back to the First World War. After his war injury, his attending physician prescribed a vegetarian diet. And as would often be the case with Hitler, if something agreed with him, he would stick with it thereafter. Once he told us his theory: 'Look here, a lion eats heaps of meat, he then feels sluggish and disappears in some corner and goes to sleep. In contrast, a camel gets a bag of hay and thrives in spite of the desert's hardships. Why wouldn't the same be true for the human being? If he is a vegetarian, wouldn't it then be correct to say that he could be as fit as a camel? So, in other words, why shouldn't he follow a meatless diet as well?'"

— *Living with Hitler: Accounts of Hitlers Household Staff by Anna Plaim, Herbert Döhring, and Karl Wilhelm Krause*

He [Hitler] sometimes dictated his speeches until the early hours of the morning, sometimes even till 4 a.m. When he went to bed so late, he would also sleep in, until eleven or twelve o'clock. On the other days he was woken up towards half past nine. The newspapers were brought to him and he would read them still in his bedroom. For breakfast he was served tea, rusk biscuits and milk. Until the outbreak of the war, he drank full-fat milk; after that, the Boss would have only skimmed milk, tea and curd cheese for breakfast. Hitler, as we know, was completely vegetarian. All the stuff that was written about him after the war, much of that isn't true. He ate a lot of vegetables, curd cheese, rice and soups. My wife would also have this so-called sour soup – it was made with fried batter pearls and roasted breadcrumbs. Because of his being vegetarian, Hitler never ate meat. The things that Hitler's chief aide Julius Schaub said are not correct. What is conclusive and true is that when the operation was still very small, he would often come all by himself to the kitchen and ask my wife: 'So, Anna, what might you be cooking today? Just make sure that it's not meat, you know, ever since suffering from gas poisoning during the First World War I cannot even smell meat. That is abhorrent to me, my mucous membranes are all in a mess, I don't taste anything and have to throw up.' It was the gas poisoning that caused Hitler to give up meat. My wife and also his half-sister, Angela Raubal, confirmed this. But then, over the course of time, Professor Theodor Morell totally exaggerated the vegetarian diet. That's what we also said to the staff: 'How can a man who carries such a heavy burden survive on a diet of raw cabbage, red carrot juice, cucumber juice and this special brew?' The brew even had a special name, and came from a health-food shop in Berchtesgaden. Every lunchtime, a vehicle was dispatched especially to fetch the brew. The shop was close to the Grand Hotel, later called the Berchtesgaden Hof.

— *Living with Hitler: Accounts of Hitler's Household Staff* by Anna Plaim, Herbert Döhring, and Karl Wilhelm Krause

« On 19 June 1937, I was forty years old, and Kannenberg was given special instructions by Hitler to prepare my favourite dinner: roast pork with potato dumplings. Now Hitler was, of course, a vegetarian, and how he came to know about my non-vegetarian fancies was rather funny. 'Baur,' he said one day, 'you know the best thing for you would be vegetarian food such as I eat. It soothes the nerves and it's very good for you. You really ought to become a vegetarian. You'd be very healthy.' 'I'm already very healthy,' I replied, 'and my nerves are all right too. And I'll tell you something else: I'm not one of those hypocrites who come here and eat a vegetarian meal with you and then go over afterwards to Kannenberg and have a proper meal. I'd sooner have one good meal of roast pork with potato dumplings than all the nut cutlets in the world. You'll never make me a vegetarian.'»

— *Hans Baur, I Was Hitler's Pilot: The Memoirs of Hans Baur*

It is like a miracle for all of us how he survives physical and mental strain. One has the impression that it does not affect him at all. He doesn't smoke or drink, eats only vegetarian food, lives simply like any other of the people, has no pleasure or relaxation other than his work and his task. Once the German people have recognised him in all his greatness, they will follow him unconditionally in all their millions. (Goebbels Diaries; 15th Feb 1933)

[...]

The leader is a convinced vegetarian, and that on principle. His arguments cannot be seriously countered. They are resounding. He does not think much at all of homo sapiens . (Goebbels Diaries;29 December 1939)

[...]

The food will be fine . The leader again professes to be a passionate advocate of vegetarianism, which he sees as the basis of a coming new religion .(Goebbels Diaries;24 September 1940)

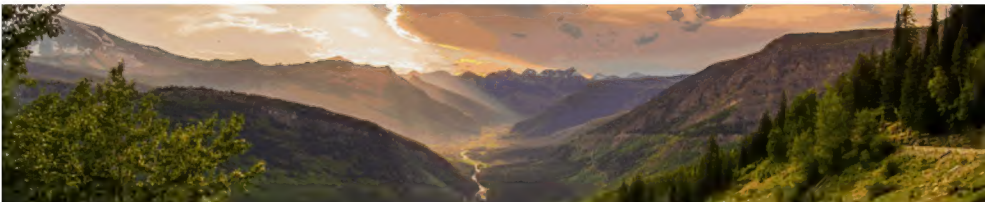
[...]

There the Führer is quite consistent and has all tangible arguments at hand. Incidentally, he too longs for peace, happiness and joie de vivre. (Goebbels Diaries;13 November 1940)

"Cf. DNB illustrated reports, August 3, 1944. Hitler had recovered extraordinarily quickly from the injuries he had sustained, like the slight damage to one of his eardrums. He prided himself on this fact and, according to his manservant Linge, maintained to Keitel and several staff members of his headquarters: "There you go—I recovered more quickly because I am a vegetarian." Cf. Linge, No. 18. Nevertheless, for a long time, Hitler as a hypochondriac feared contracting a middle-ear infection as a complication of the earlier injuries. He also made use of his supposedly "imperiled health" as an excuse to avoid having to fly to the west to inspect the frontline there. Cf. discussion of the situation on August 31, 1944, in Heiber, pp. 607 f."

—Max Domarus, Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations 1932 – 1945

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